

A SALES SIMULATION AT A GLANCE

“Technology-based simulations are frequently used in high risk industries/professions such as aviation, medicine, nuclear power and the military, as the consequences of failure are very high. Although Sales doesn’t have ‘life or death’ consequences, the risk of losing existing Customers or failing to grow revenue can be deadly to any business.”

Marsh White has developed many unique sales and sales management concepts. Our most noteworthy expertise, however, lies in simulating the business world of the most essential revenue producing resource most organizations possess as well as their toughest client – top sales performers!

Marsh White’s innovative instructional approach recreates industry-specific environments, challenges sellers to perform and provides intense individual analysis and coaching of a seller’s thinking, planning and execution skills. Sales simulations enable participants to closely examine their own business development capabilities, ultimately increasing their sales professionalism and revenue production.

Marsh White’s “human not computer-based” Simulation training approach is a well thought out adult educational technology that strives for Heuristic Learning (i.e., uncoached awareness). The value and success of the Simulation approach is supported by numerous studies focusing on cognitive skill development. In fact, the approach is one of the most powerful vehicles for leadership development and organizational change especially when dealing with experienced professionals.

The common experiences in every real world “Human Simulations” are:

- *the opportunity to see the entire “event” and adjust “the play;”*
- *the reality that nobody dies and no money is lost; and*
- *the fact that no one comes out of the Simulation thinking “the same old way!”*

Further, numerous, integrated behaviors and competencies can be performed and demonstrated dynamically outside of pure theory to produce desired, expected results and observable performance.

Overview

A “human” Sales Simulation is a unique training/development experience that promotes adult learning by creating an environment “rich” in opportunities to observe the performance of tactical contact and strategic thinking sales skills. The Sales Simulation” has been designed to recreate approximately ninety days in the life of a typical sales person. In addition to sales calls, time has been allocated for strategizing the account/situation, planning and debriefing sales calls, developing a teaming process (if appropriate to the target audience) and potentially developing strategies to pursue sales opportunities flowing from the qualification phase of the sales process. Further, the “Simulation” environment invites participants to use skills and techniques gleaned from other training and life experiences.

A SALES SIMULATION AT A GLANCE

Purpose

The purpose of the “Simulation” is to enhance the participants’ sales effectiveness by:

Providing a practical arena where sales skills, knowledge and discipline are integrated and challenged through a realistic competitive business situation recreation in order to elevate experience and competence.

Underlying Motivation

The underlying motivation is simple: “People learn by doing!” Professionals can be taught techniques and their application to the business environment. However, convincing experienced professionals to embrace those techniques requires a “gut-level” belief in the value of the learning experience and is a matter of self-awareness! This level of impact occurs only when the learning experience connects directly to the professionals’ “real world” business environment.

Objectives

At the conclusion of the Simulation, each participant will have experienced:

- Performing/demonstrating previously learned (abilities) skills/techniques in a dynamic, practical setting that approximates their “real world;”
- Applying Marsh White’s paradigms to increase impact/effectiveness of both strategic and tactical sales fundamentals;
- Observing their sales performance in a practical/non-theoretical setting;
- Receiving immediate coaching to correct ineffective sales practices and reinforcement to ensure replication of effective sales practices.

These experiences result in a momentum that ensures individual confidence and commitment in carrying out their roles in the real world sales environment.

The Process

At the heart of the Simulation is a “true-to-life business situation.” This situation includes an entity that recreates a potential real world account as well as any associated consultants, distributors or any other ancillary entities that may exist in the real world. Each entity is “fully scripted” with sufficient detail to ensure consistency and reality throughout.

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Getting Started

Procedurally, the participants will be divided into teams. Each team will start in exactly the same place with the same information, products, services, etc. ... essentially ... “a matched race.” All teams will make multiple calls with full participation of each individual. The progression of calls will simulate the “buildup” equivalent to that of a real-life situation.

Prior to the first sales call and essential to the direction of the series of sales calls, the participants are encouraged (Heuristic learning) to develop a sales strategy. The intent of this strategy is to penetrate the account and further their competitive sales position; thus challenging not only tactical sales contact skills but also strategic sales thinking. Further, the Simulation also requires combining strategic skills with the ability to analyze and interpret account information.

The account penetration strategies are not “expected” initially; however, they are “inspected” on a team-by-team basis at pivotal learning points in the Simulation. Further, these strategies are presented on the last day of the workshop along with strategies to pursue qualified sales opportunities.

Instructor Roles

The instructors will share the task of playing the account and other entity employee roles. They will always be present during every role-play to ensure consistency. The instructor not specifically involved in the role itself will provide a key learning contribution to the entire process by providing coaching immediately following the sales call. Examples of coaching points covered include, but are not limited to:

- What objectives/outcomes had been set for the call? What was achieved?
- What were the attitudes, values, and concerns of the personality called on?
- Who controlled the call? Why?
- Which key skills/techniques employed in the call were successfully used? Which skills require corrective improvement? Why?

On occasion, the instructors may visit the break-out rooms to act as “advisors/coaches” by providing (as an example) guidance in one of the following areas:

- While not contributing substantive help, they will redirect those teams going significantly astray.
- They will assure that the teams are functioning synergistically by soliciting and accepting input from each participant.
- They will be in a tutorial position to critique the team collectively and individually on their strategy development, call planning and “teamwork” skills.

This coaching facilitates a smooth flowing Simulation environment, enhances “team building” and ensures the optimum experience for the participants.

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Conclusion

At the conclusion of the Sales Simulation, each team will be expected to present “to management”: its account position, its strategy to pursue the business beyond the current state, as well as the assorted tactics to further develop, close, or uncover sales opportunities. The presentation to management will be conducted while the remaining participant audience observes. This setting has the unique effect of providing multiple competitors’ views of/and approach to the same account/sales situation.

A final retrospective learning experience follows these team presentations at the conclusion of the program when the participants and instructors “look back” at the utilization of skills and techniques relative to the level of “success” achieved by each team.

Marsh White’s adaptation of the “Simulation” approach to sales and management development challenges experienced performers, demands creativity, fosters immediate feedback and builds personal conviction ... “buy-in.” The “Simulation” approach distinguishes Marsh White in the business of sales and management consulting.